Kenan Chapel Prayers

Mary Boney Sheats

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Kenan Chapel Prayers

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Wilmington, North Carolina

Mary Boney Sheats

First Printing

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125 South Third Street
Wilmington, North Carolina 28401

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Printed in the United States of America
Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number 95-061894

The logo used in this book is taken from the seal of the Presbyterian Church. See page 157-158 for logo description and symbolism.

Except as noted, all colored photographs were made by Freda Wilkins, photographer, of Wilmington. She used a 4" x 5" format view camera, with Kodak Ektachrome film. She also copied the black and white pictures made and furnished by others.

This book was printed by Atlantic Publishing Company of Tabor City, NC using a Heidelberg press. The text is typeset in Berkeley. This volume is printed on 90 lb. Mohawk Innovation paper.

The title sheet photograph by Todd Sumlin of the Wilmington Star-News pictures the Kenan Tower steeple with the wind vane cock silhouetted against the full moon. The cock is a reminder that while all have sinned, they can be forgiven through prayer.

Photo Credit: William J. Boney, Jr.

DEDICATION

This volume is dedicated to those who participated in the Kenan Chapel Bible Studies.

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About the Teacher

Mary Boney Sheats is a daughter of the church whose professional life has been in the area of Christian Education and Bible teaching. Upon her retirement as Fuller E. Calloway Professor of Bible and Religion at Agnes Scott College, she returned to Wilmington where she was subsequently asked to teach this class.

She is an elder and author of several books and Bible studies for the Presbyterian Church. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She has a master's degree from Emory University, Atlanta, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University, New York. She has received honorary doctorates from Austin College, Sherman, Texas, and Presbyterian College, Clinton, South Carolina.

Introduction

by E. Douglas Vaughan, Jr.
Pastor, First Presbyterian Church

The adult students who participated in Dr. Sheat's Bible studies in Kenan Chapel still talk about the blessings they received.

They talk about the remarkable way Mary Boney Sheats led them on that journey through the books of the Bible. Few would be as qualified as she to be such a guide. For more than three decades, she taught Bible and Religion at Agnes Scott College. She is the author of widely read books and articles which have enriched the lives of countless persons and congregations. She has served the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) as Elder, Presbytery Moderator and member of numerous committees and commissions. For her service to church and community she has been recognized with honorary doctorates from two colleges. Those who sat through Dr. Sheats' Kenan Chapel Bible studies still talk about how all these accomplishments and experiences brought focus to these classes.

But they also talk about the brief prayers with which Dr. Sheats began each of those classes. In *The Institutes* Calvin speaks of prayer as "... an intimate conversation of the pious with God..." (III,20,xvi). Clearly, Dr. Sheats' students at First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, NC, felt not only that they were overhearing such conversations but that they were drawn into them. They asked for copies of these prayers which, in turn, became their own.

There are many scholars in the world; some would say too many. There are many persons of faith also, surely not enough. But those who came to know Mary Boney Sheats as their teacher in Kenan Chapel during the three years' duration of this class, recognized in her a rare and dynamic combination of scholarship and piety. In the end it was that combination which made the series memorable and produced the blessings that are remembered.

The Kenan Chapel Prayers

These are prayers given at the beginning of Sunday morning Bible study in Kenan Chapel. They were delivered over a period from March 1988 to May 1991.

While often related to the subject of the lesson, they are always thoughts which seemed appropriate to the day and time.

The prayers are asking for the minds and hearts of the group to be opened in order that God's voice may speak.

Each is offered with the conviction that the same Holy Spirit who inspired those who wrote the Biblical record, also directs an understanding of the Bible today.

In printing these offerings, it is recognized that prayer is a very personal relationship with God. While expressed in words, in reality it is an individual experience.

This book is being made available at the request of some of those who have attended the chapel class. The prayers were not given for publication and are reproduced as originally written. General titles have been assigned later for identification.

Bible Study Subjects

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The Acts of the Apostles	March 13 - May 29, 1988
How We Got Our Bible	June 5 - July 24, 1988
The Sermon on the Mount	August 7 - September 18, 1988
Paul's Letters from Jail	October 2, 1988 - January 1, 1989
The Books of the Apocrypha	February 5 - February 26, 1989
Religious Ideas of the Bible	
God	March 5 - March 26, 1989
Humankind	April 2 - April 16, 1989
Sin	April 23 - May 14, 1989
Salvation	May 21 - May 28, 1989
Life After Death	June 4, 1989
Four Portraits, One Person	September 10 - December 1989
The Gospels According to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John	
The Book of Isaiah	February 4 - April 29, 1990
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The Torah	October 7 - December 9, 1990
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Thanks Be to God!

All praise to you, our Creator, our Redeemer,
our constant source of guidance and comfort.
We thank you for the ties that bind us together in this place,
in this church, and especially for the privilege
of having you speak through your word, your eternal truth.
We ask your help and healing for those in this class
who need you in a special way.
Open the ears and hearts of all who listen to you
speaking in these buildings, and throughout your world.
Thank you for Luke,
thank you for Paul,
As they remind us of Jesus Christ.

Amen

May 22, 1988

A Lamp to Our Feet

We thank you for your word,
for its witness to our past
and its hope for our future.
We claim your word as a lamp to our feet,
guiding us where to take the next step
in the name of our Savior,
as the living Word whose light
we need to shine on our way.
Speak to all who study in these halls.
Send us all a sense of your peace and your purpose,
teaching us how to love you more,
in Jesus Christ.

Amen

June 12, 1988

Words Alive

Lord,

hear our expression of gratitude for your written word:

to those whose ears were tuned to hear your voice,

to those who had skills to write,

to translate, to interpret.

Show each of us how your word may come alive in us,

bringing meaning to our days.

Amen

19 June 1988

Old Words, Forever New

We thank you, Lord, for our Bible:

for those whom you inspired to write,

for those you empowered to translate and preserve.

We thank you for the way this ancient book is forever new,

and has a way of speaking to us across the centuries.

Help us recognize your personal word to us in this hour.

Amen

June 26, 1988

Gifts of Life and Love

We come again to praise you

—for the gift of life, the support of friends and family;

—for this church which is your church and our church;

—for its sacraments here and throughout the world.

Now we thank you for your word,

and for all who have written and preserved it.

Open our ears to your message through this word,

to our particular situation.

Amen

July 3, 1988

The Communion of Saints

We are drawn to this place, O Lord,
out of custom, and out of a deep need
to be reminded of your presence undergirding our lives.
Grant that we may not leave these buildings today
without our awareness of your being with us.
We thank you
for the communion of saints
and for the ties that bind us together in Christ,
for all those who have worshipped here with us in times past,
for those with us now, and
for those who will come after.
O Lord, we believe in the communion of saints
for we have felt the warmth of your interest.
Now hear us as we express our gratitude
for those whom you have used
to bring your written word to us,
in language we can understand.

Amen

July 17, 1988

For the Beauty of Our Surroundings

Eternal God,

Creator of heaven and earth,

we thank you for your having called us into being

and for your having placed us in this beautiful part of your world.

We thank you for making contact with us through your written word:

—for those who have heard you speak,

—for those who have recorded and translated
and printed and distributed your word, and

—for those who through the years
have helped us to understand.

Amen

July 24, 1988

Breaking the Bread of Life

O God, you have called us to worship;

and you have promised us your presence as our Guide.

We claim these gifts now, not only for ourselves

but for all who study in our church,

in all the churches of Wilmington,

and in meeting places around your world.

Hear us as we remember before you our special loved ones

who are studying and worshipping in other places today.

Now we ask you to break the bread of life to us

as we face and are faced by your gospel

in the Book of Matthew.

Amen

August 7, 1988

As Children to a Parent

O God,

you are beyond all that our minds can fathom,

greater than the highest reaches of our imagination,

yet you have told us to come to you as children to a parent.

And so we come now,

thanking you for the blessings of the past week,

for your guidance and protection each day.

We pray that your healing touch may be upon all

who need you in a special way for body,

for mind,

and for spirit.

We thank you for your word,

for the way it illumines our daily life;

and we ask your leading in this hour together.

Amen

August 14, 1988

God of the Marching Centuries

"God of the marching centuries,
Lord of the passing years,
Leading a people's victories,
Sharing a people's tears. . . ."

We thank you for what you have shared with us this week:
those triumphs, those bits of good news,
and also those times of failure,
of hurt and disappointment.
We thank you that you are our companion through it all.
Direct our minds this hour
that we may think clearly.
When we recognize your leading,
give us the courage to take the steps
as Christ would have us take.
As you have been with us in the past,
we look to you for the assurance
that you are taking us by the hand for the rest of the journey.

We thank you for all who have gone before us in this place.

Amen

August 21, 1988

"Hallowed Be Your Name"

O God,

you are from everlasting to everlasting,

beyond space and time, and yet beside us here.

"Hallowed be your name."

We praise you for your watchful care over us and those whom we love.

We thank you for that measure of health,

and peace, and comfort, and challenge

with which you bless our lives each week.

Bless all who study in these halls:

little children whose lives are being molded

by what their teachers are doing and saying;

young people who are watching models

they find among our church members;

all of us in the awesome influence we have on one another.

Bless our church and its impact on our city and places beyond.

We ask this day for open eyes and ears

that we may see and hear the calls for help

— especially the silent ones

— coming from our companions in life.

Show us what it is to be a friend.

Be especially close to those who are of special concern to us,

particularly those whose loss of loved ones continues to be an ache.

And now, O Lord, break the bread of life,

as "beyond the sacred page" we seek you,

our God, through your living word.

Amen

August 28, 1988

Make Your Way Plain

Lord God, Creator of the universe and maker of each one of us:
We praise you for calling us to this place, this day;
for the health and strength
that make our presence here together possible.
We bow in awe before your holiness.
Our hearts overflow in gratitude for your special mercies
to us this past week.
We give you thanks for all those choice people
with whom you have surrounded our lives:
at home, at work, in our neighborhoods.
We thank you for the privilege of study,
for the gift of Scripture in a language we can understand;
and for all those parents, teachers, and ministers who have made your
word plain in our lives.
We ask your special guidance for our church during this fall season,
during this transition period.
We pray for all who are our special care and concern,
whom we name in the silence of our hearts.

Amen

September 4, 1988

Is There Any Word from the Lord?

Here we are again, Lord,
with the peculiar sets of baggage that we bring along
coming to this place with our question:
"Is there any word from the Lord?"
And we are confident that there is,
if we know how to listen.
You have tried to speak to us this week
through the people we've been with,
through the events of our lives, and
through your daily presence with us.
Now we ask you to speak
through your written word,
opening our minds and hearts to dare
to listen for that word
of rebuke,
of comfort,
of direction
you have for each of us.
We ask your special blessing on those who need you keenly:
—those who are sick,
—those who minister to the sick,
—those who are ready to give up.
Reassure us with the conviction that this world is not all there is,
but that there lies before each of us Eternal Life in Jesus Christ.

Amen

September 11, 1988

"Safely Through Another Week"

Eternal God,
whose power upholds the universe and
whose presence is here with us now,
we claim your promise that you are in our midst.
You have brought us safely through another week,
and we praise your name for protecting us.
You have brought us healing and health,
and we give you our gratitude.
When our neighbors have been devastated
by wind and water and fire,
we have been spared,
and for this we give you humble thanks.
We thank you for our church,
our church here and our church
—your church— around the world.
We cherish those ties that bind us with
the followers of Jesus Christ throughout the centuries.
Now we thank you for your written word,
and we ask that you speak to our inner hearts
that message we need for this day,
that we may "love Christ more dearly,
follow him more nearly";
every day.

Amen

September 18, 1988

The Joys of Life

Creator and Lord of all the world, we give you thanks
for bringing us in good health to this church, this day.

We thank you for the ties that bind us to each other
with the great cloud of witnesses that surround us in faith.

We bring to you our assortment of needs:
our need to be forgiven, especially for any we may have hurt this week;
our need to be forgiven for our neglect of you;

our need to show gratitude to those who have helped us this week,
and who have influenced us for good;

our need to be more honest and straight-forward with people,
more open and more caring.

We bring to you the joys of our lives:
the family members with whom you let us live;

the children and young people you let us watch grow into
amazing human beings;

"October's bright blue weather"; comfortable homes, good food;
the challenge of work and the enjoyment of leisure.

And now we thank you for the opportunity of studying
your servant, Paul.
Speak to us through the witness of what he wrote.

Amen

October 2, 1988

The Enrichment of Life

Infinite and eternal God,
beyond our highest imagination to conceive,
we come boldly into your august presence at your own invitation.

We thank you for the Scriptures through which you assure us
that you want us to come,
and so here we are.

We praise you for the wonderful world in
which you have placed us;
for the friends and family members
with whom you daily enrich our lives;
for the work you have given us to do,
and the strength and skill to perform it.

We pray for your guiding hand
in showing us the responsibilities you expect us to bear in your world.

Show us those places where you can use our hands, our hearts,
our encouragement, our money, our words —
to ease the suffering of your children around the world.

Bind us together in the fellowship of your church worldwide
and your church right here;
and give us tolerance and patience with each other.
Now we thank you for your servant Paul,
and ask that you will speak to us through his words,
by the power of your Holy Spirit.

Amen

October 9, 1988

Closer Than Breathing

God our Creator, our Redeemer, our Sustainer:
You have made us for yourself, and when we have wandered
away from you,
you have brought us back home.
When we have sinned, you have stood ready to forgive.
You have been "closer to us than breathing, nearer than hands or feet."
O Lord, keep us ever aware of your closeness.
We come to you hungry for a word from you.
For decisions that are before us we need your guidance
and your prompting.
For loved ones here and in distant places, we need the assurance
that you are with them and supporting them when we cannot.
For missionaries: Herbert and Page Codington,
Sandy and Kitty Marks,
for ambassadors and other leaders in lonely and dangerous places,
we pray.
For leaders of our nation, our state, our counties (for Al Corbett),
our cities (Kathie Hoyt) we ask your direction.
Especially do we pray for your guidance of our Pastor Nominating
Committee, that in your good time you may lead them
and us to our new under-shepherd.
We thank you for sending us the Stitts during these crucial
months, and we pray for traveling mercies for them.

Amen

October 16, 1988

More Than Money

Infinite and Omnipotent God, our refuge and strength,
we thank you for your guidance through another week.
We thank you for the beauty we have seen in the fall color of trees;
for the nobleness and unselfishness
we have observed in some of your children.
We are grateful especially for the challenge
that this time of the church year offers
in giving us the opportunity
to be good stewards.
We acknowledge that all we have, all we are,
comes ultimately from you.
Although we behave sometimes as though the world is our own,
we know deep down all is a trust from you.
Bless our officers and all who have particular responsibility in
seeing that we are cheerful givers of our time and substance.
We pray for those in special need:
for the hungry, the homeless,
and those who feel that even you have abandoned them;
for those who have too much to do and are weary with doing it;
for those who do not have enough to do, and who feel useless.
Bless all such.
Whatever we do, help us keep our priorities straight,
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

October 23, 1988

Success and Failure

God our Creator, we thank you for the gifts of life and health
that enable us to come to your house today.
Week after week we come and go;
we go on trips and we come back here.
We thank you for your guiding hand,
and for the safety net you provide for us in times of danger.
We bring before you in our hearts
those who are undergoing deep pain and distress,
especially those into whose circle death has come,
and for whom life will never be the same again.
Show us how our faith gives us perspective in enduring
whatever comes to us.
We pray for those who have known success
and satisfaction this week,
that they may be kept from pride;
for those who have experienced failure,
that they may be kept from despair.
We ask your presence with all who are ministering
in the name of Jesus Christ
throughout the world:
missionaries, preachers, doctors,
nurses, teachers, distributors of food and clothing.
We ask your special presence with little children, and older people,
and for all who are taking care of the helpless.
We pray for marriages, especially those where
there is tension and misunderstanding,
and we pray for renewal of the bonds of faithfulness.
In the spirit of Jesus Christ.
Amen

October 30, 1988

We Need You Every Hour

When we get quiet and still, we realize how much we need you.

We need you every hour; and you are with us every hour.

"When we with our petty concerns are too busy to remember you, you, with a universe to govern, are not too busy to remember us."

We thank you today for our church; for this church;
for this church where we have found some of our best friends;
where we have married our best friends;
where we have come for comfort and thanksgiving
when our loved ones have died.
We thank you for your church throughout the world that
ministers in Christ's name to those in need.
We come to you in our various stages of concern.
Some of us need desperately
to be assured of your love and care for our dear ones
who suffer beyond our ability to help them.
Some of us need direction in tough decisions we have to make.
Some of us need you to give meaning to the humdrum dullness of our lives.
We are not sick; we are not in particular trouble;
we do not face any new challenges;
but we need you, O Holy Spirit, to kindle fire in us anew,
that we may see in people and events about us
the call to be your ambassadors, to be your hands, feet, and voices
in the corner where you have put us.
Speak to us through your servant, Paul.

Amen

November 6, 1988

News Good and Not Good

God of our separate lives, Lord of our lives together,
we hush our souls and think of you.

We praise you for your incomparable greatness as Creator of all things that are, and we thank you for your grace
in coming to this planet in Jesus Christ,
to show us how life is to be lived.

Because you have invited us to come to you,
we bring with us the joys of our lives:
the new life that has come into our midst,
through marriages and babies;
the good news we have received this week in the mail or by phone;
the restorations to health we have been given;
the daily companionship of those who enrich
our lives and make it easier for us to become what you want us to be.

Not all news has been good:
we mourn the bad news from laboratories
and through the health professions;
we regret the disappointments we suffer in children
who are not fulfilling their potential;
we grieve as we observe the slow erosion of mind and body
brought on by the passing years.

We thank you for the promise of the week ahead.
Grant that we may accept each day
as a gift of your grace, to be lived as though it were our last,
and as though we have eternity to spend in your presence.
Help us to be the disciples you need all our days.

Amen

November 13, 1988

Time to Give Thanks

O God, we thank you for the rest of the night
and for the week of giving thanks.
We thank you for putting us in families,
even though living in close quarters sometimes has its irritations.
We thank you for our church, past, present, and future.
We pray for those who are sick among us,
and for those who are worried about themselves and their loved ones.
We ask your special support
for those under stress,
for those concerned about health or finances.
We pray for those who find it hard to forgive themselves,
who cannot believe the good news
of what the coming of Jesus Christ really meant,
with his death blotting out our sins and
with his resurrection assuring us of eternal life.
We pray for all who are studying in our church building this hour;
for little children who are being influenced by dedicated teachers;
for young people who ar growing in their understanding of the faith;
for adults who find support from fellow class members
and stimulation from your written word.
We pray for those who lead us in our giving of thanks:
for our minister, our liturgists, our organist and choir.
Recharge our run-down batteries with your Holy Spirit,
and kindle in us strength and joy for the week ahead.
All this we ask for your love's sake.

Amen

November 27, 1988

Christ, Human/Christ, Divine

Eternal God, you who have created us,
each one separately, uniquely, to be your own,
you are unsatisfied until we are reunited with you.
We thank you for making us your own.
In this season of Advent
We worship you as the Coming One,
the one who came in humble human flesh
and redeemed us,
though we do not deserve it.
We worship you as the Holy Spirit and the spirit of holiness,
as our companion and our comforter.
We rejoice in the fact that you, the God of the universe,
knows what it is like to be human:
to be tempted, to be lonely, to suffer,
and also to rejoice, and to revel in the gifts
you have given all your creatures.
Grant that we may not use our humanity as an excuse for shabby behavior.
We thank you for your presence with us this past week.
We thank you for lifting us from discouragement,
for seeing us through times of fear and hours of stress.
We thank you for the times you have helped us
to curb our tongues, to resist temptation, to lend helping hands.
We thank you for all whom Christ would have us call "neighbor".
Especially in this season we ask for a spirit of generosity,
along with a sense of discrimination
in using the resources with which you have blessed us.
Amen

December 4, 1988

Open the Road of Compassion

"Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations."
You have stood by our parents, our grandparents, and all our predecessors.
You have been our refuge and strength,
a ready help in all kinds of trouble.
You have been with us this past week,
keeping us out of difficulties, allaying our fears,
furnishing us with good companions,
giving us worthwhile jobs to do.
Your boundless grace to us is underlined
by the tragedies that have befallen
your creatures in other parts of the world.
We pray for them, that they may know your compassion.
We thank you that we worship a God who knows what suffering is,
even death by the worst means a cruel government
could devise, in the cross of Jesus Christ.
Because of our love for Christ, and thus for all your creatures,
help us to show our compassion through
deeds and gifts of love and concern.
We pray for those of our number who need you in special ways:
those who wait anxiously for good news of loved ones far away;
those who wait for word that they will soon have employment;
those who fear they will lose a love they had counted on.
Now we thank you for this Book, which speaks to us
as no other volume can;
and we ask you to give each one of us the particular word
we need from you.
For your love's sake,

Amen

December 11, 1988

Prepare Our Homes and Our Hearts

Lord, we thank you for the hope this season brings,
hope anchored in our faith, faith in your love that came to Bethlehem.
We come into your presence this morning asking particularly
for your help in preparing us for Christmas.
As we think about the first Christmas,
grant that we may not be like Herod,
who tried to keep Christmas from coming
by thwarting the lives of children.
Grant that we may not be like the innkeeper,
who did not recognize Christmas when it came,
and who had no room for a couple in need.
Rather, Lord, let us be—
like the angels with a genuine song of praise in our hearts;
like the shepherds, who returned to their work glorifying God,
like the wise men, who went back to their own country another way;
like Mary, the mother, who pondered wonderful things in her heart.
Through the sounds of music, the beauty of candles and flowers,
the warmth of friends and family,
and, most of all, for the message of the Gospel,
prepare our homes and our hearts for your great Gift.
Grant that we may give sympathy and understanding
to all who are burdened with anger and depression at this time.
Lay your healing hand on all who are sick.
Open our hearts to hear your words through your servant Paul,
in the name of his Christ and ours.

Amen

December 18, 1988

Placing Our Hands in Yours

"God of the marching centuries, Lord of the passing years."
we praise you for bringing us
through the year we call 1988, and
for giving us this New Year.
We greet this New Year today by placing our hands in yours,
praying that we may recognize your presence
no matter what these next twelve months bring.
We thank you for Christmas and its reminder
of your great Gift of the Christ-child,
who was already our Redeemer when he was born.
We thank you
for family reunions,
for gifts given and received,
for the spirit of human kindness that Christmas encourages.
We pray
for those who need you in a special way:
for those who have suffered the loss of loved ones;
for those who have lost jobs, income, and the zest for life;
for those with special private heartaches; and
for those who need to cry but cannot.
We ask your special blessings for those who are
a part of compounded tragedies,
from the earthquake in Armenia,
the air crash in Scotland,
to wrecks on our own highways.

Now we thank you
for your written Word,
for the way it speaks to us across the centuries
and through the translations
to bring you into our
current lives and challenges.
In the spirit of Christ we pray,

Amen

January 1, 1989

Learning From the Past

God our Maker,

we thank you for the gift of life,

life in this place,

with the particular friends

and family members we call our own.

We remember before you

those dear to us who are in special need:

those who are sick,

those facing surgery or difficult treatment.

We ask that patience and skill

be given to doctors and those in hospitals

who hold together the fabric of faith.

We pray

for those who are grieving and whose hurt won't go away;

for those who are anxious or worried,

and find it hard to put their trust in you;

for those concerned about money, and

for those who dread taking the responsibility they feel they should take.

Bless all such.

Make them aware of Christ,

the way,

the truth, and

the life.

Help us to look back on our lives and

recall those hard spots we have been in,

where you have helped us make life bearable

when we thought we could not endure.

We thank you

for the privilege of coming to your table today,

and pray that we may truly receive you anew in our lives.

In the all-prevailing name of Jesus we pray.

Amen

February 5, 1989

For Burdens Nobly Borne

O God, we thank you for the gift of this day.

We thank you for

the health and strength to get out into your world,

and especially to come to church.

We thank you

for your care of us during the week that is past, and

we thank you for your guidance of those dear to us.

We praise you

for your goodness in giving us life and health,

families and friends,

work to do and leisure to enjoy.

We thank you

for this church, and for all the other churches

that have meant something to our growth in faith.

We thank you

for those who have shown us by their words and their lives

what your forgiveness in Jesus Christ means.

We remember before you

the special concerns of our lives, separately and together;

those who are ill;

those who are afraid — of death, of life;

our own private burdens,

the secrets we must keep.

Reassure us, our Sovereign Lord,

by your promise that nothing can separate us

from your love in Jesus Christ, in this life or the next.

Give to all

who study in these buildings the joy of learning

and a sense of discernment

of what is most important in your sight.

We pray

for our country and its leaders,

asking that we may be good and conscientious citizens,

bearing our share of the burdens

of the weak, the homeless, the hungry.

Show us how we may support

those on the front lines of sharing

Jesus' work of teaching, preaching, and healing.

For your love's sake.

Amen

February 12, 1989

Grace and Humility to Confess

Blessed God,

we close our eyes, bow our heads and think of you,
only to realize we have been in your presence all the time.

We thank you for your care through the night and
your leading us to this sacred place.

We thank you
for each other, for the body that we call the church.

Especially do we thank you
for the head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We remember before you
those we know who stand in serious need of you:
those who need your healing, your encouragement, your forgiveness,
your strength to face this next week.

Give us, we pray,
grace and humility in this Lenten season
to confess and lay before you our sins:
our secret resentments, our jealousies, our bitterness,
our impatience with those who are older than we are,
and with those who are younger.

We ask your blessing on our church as we worship today.

We pray for our church, for the Cape Fear Valley Presbytery,
for the General Assembly, in facing newness and differentness.

We pray for those who work in professions; and
for those who do manual labor.

Give them satisfaction in their responsibilities.

Bless all such.

Amen

February 19, 1989

Our Brother George

O God,

in life we are close to death,

and in death,

through our resurrected Lord we are close to life.

We praise you

for your gift of life to us, and

for the preciousness of each day of life.

Hear us

as we remember before you those who are in pain today:

those who are facing crises,

those who grieve,

those who are overwhelmed with problems too great for them.

Help them to feel sustained by your everlasting arms.

We give you heartfelt thanks for the life of

our brother George Fulenwider:

for his deeply entrenched love for his church:

its members,

its buildings,

its program.

We thank you

for the example of unquestioned faithfulness

he leaves with us.

Give strength and pride to his family

that they may rejoice in the wonderful heritage

of a noble life he has left.

We thank you

for all the ties that bind us to you

and to each other in the fellowship of the church.

Reinforce the spirits of all who claim your name

and do your work.

For the sake of Christ we pray.

Amen

February 26, 1989

The Freshness of the Word

Lord, we come into your presence
not just because it is our custom,
but because we are driven to seek you.
You have made us
so that we are restless, disturbed
and unfulfilled without you.
And so we ask you
to make your presence known to us.
You have saved us from danger this past week.
You have blessed us with comfortable homes,
in a day when all too many people do not have a place to stay.
You have fed us when thousands of your children are starving.
You have given us health
when millions are suffering.
You have brought us into the fellowship of your church
when many people feel lonely and neglected and unforgiven.
And then, Lord, when we do face tough times,
you never let us suffer more than we can bear.
Thanks be to God !
Open our minds and hearts this hour to
the freshness of your Word, and guide those
who seek your truth in the new and the old.
For our Lord's sake.

Amen

March 5, 1989

The Face of Jesus Christ

Eternal God,

you "commanded the light to shine out of darkness,"

and you have shone in our hearts,

"to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

in the face of Jesus Christ."

We thank you

for that revelation of yourself

you have given each one of us through the years.

We thank you

for creating us,

for placing us in blessed circumstances,

in our homes and in our church.

Lord, you alone know what each of us brings with us today;

memories of good things that have happened;

awareness of responsibilities that challenge;

the need to be assured that we are forgiven

for our sins and that we may turn over

our burdens to you.

We bring into your presence

those people who concern us especially today:

those who are sick, worried, grieving, lonely,

all those for whom the future looks bleak.

We pray for our church in worship, in our congregational meeting,

in the preparation of those who will be officers.

We pray for our country, our president and
all national leaders.
We ask that
wherever we go this week
we may be a healing influence,
constructive in the opinions we express,
biting our tongues to keep
from saying things that should not be said, and
looking for glimmerings of your spirit
shining out of darkness.
And so bless all
who meet to study and worship in this house, and
in all houses where your name is spoken, and
your face reflected for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen

March 12, 1989

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

God of all the universe and Lord of our lives,

We thank you

for the love you have infused in us all our days,

as we consider all of your greatness and your grandeur:

for our parents and other relatives

who always recognized us with open arms;

for teachers, who have believed in us,

and served as our models and mentors.

We thank you

for our colleagues at work and in our corporate life;

we thank you

for younger friends and children who reaffirm our worth.

We come asking your forgiveness

for the times this week we have disappointed

ourselves in not having been faithful

to your leading.

We are grateful for the assurance

that you do forgive,

even before we repent.

As we know your love in Christ Jesus,

help us to feel your cleansing power.

As this Holy Week begins

we ask that we may be mindful of our Lord each day,

especially as we think of those who are sick, and

are discouraged about their chances of getting well;

those who grieve an irreplaceable loss;

those who are fearful of the future.

Remind us that

"underneath are the everlasting arms",

and that we, and all whom we love

are in your constant care, in life and in death.

Open our ears

to the message from your written word

that we need to hear from this Holy Week.

For Christ's sake.

Amen

March 19, 1989

Facing Death, Facing Life

O God of Power and Might, of thunder and sunshine,
we bow before you in thanksgiving and praise
for bringing us to this place today.
We thank you for the promise of Easter
which we can celebrate each Sabbath;
for our church and all the people we know
through a common bond of loyalty to Jesus Christ.
We thank you for the rhythm of work and rest;
for duties to perform and
for those experiences through which we can be recreated.
We bring before you those who are dear to us:
those who are sick; those who have had bad news;
those for whom death seems to loom near and
who need faith to face it;
for those who want to die, who wonder why they linger in this life.
Lord, we pray for courage to face death, and for grace to face life
when we see no further meaning in it.
Help us to trust you for that meaning.
O Lord, guide those in the throes of indecision:
those who have come to a dividing line, a parting of the ways.
Show us how your word can be "a lamp unto our feet"
— not a searchlight that will reveal the distant future,
but enough illumination for the next step.
Bless all the members of this class,
and reinforce our efforts to be faithful and diligent in the jobs
you give us to do in your kingdom.
For your love's sake.

Amen

April 2, 1989

For Patience and Forgiveness

O God, in whom we live and move and have our being,
we revel in every chance we have to be our true selves
in your presence.
You know all there is to know about us,
and you have assured us in Jesus Christ
that you love in spite of our unlovableness,
and our constant turning from you.
We come before you in awe for the wonderful world you
have made, and for the great people you have nurtured.
We praise you for those you have given us to love.
Show us how we may be faithful to each one of them.
Lord, give us patience with those whom we find difficult to love,
or like. Remind us that you love each one of your creatures
even as you love us.
We thank you for your patience with us,
for your forgiveness of us,
and we pray that our gratitude will
overflow in the way we treat other people.
Hear us as we pray for those in special need:
those who are sick, and discouraged about their
prospects of getting well;
those who still feel keenly the pangs of bereavement;
those who are worried about young people who are headed
down the wrong paths;

those who are lonely, who have outlived all their
family and friends.
We place in your hands marriages that have lost
their sparkle, and have drifted away from
a center they once had in you.
Now we thank you for our church,
and for your church universal.
Prepare us for the pastor who may come to us,
and be at the core of his heart, that he may
lead us closer to you,
In Jesus Christ, Amen.

April 9, 1989

The High Calling of Prayer

Lord God,

we thank you for the high calling of prayer,

for your awesome invitation to come to you,

to link our minds with the power that undergirds the universe,

and to open ourselves to your limitless love and forgiveness.

We thank you for your protection of us and

and those dear to us this past week.

We thank you for the witness of those of our members

who go on missions of mercy, and we pray for their continuing influence.

We ask your special blessing for those who are in hospitals,

and those who are ill at home;

we pray for those who have no home.

We pray for the Habitat program, and

for all in government and social services

who are working to provide shelter for the homeless.

We thank you for the communion of saints;

for those we have known and worked with and loved

who are now in the church triumphant;

for those of other denominations;

for our branch of Christendom that is Presbyterian;

for our Presbytery and Synod as we get used to new patterns and people.

For all the ties that bind us together, we give you thanks,

joining in prayer that all of us

may be faithful to you as we know you in Jesus Christ.

Amen

April 16, 1989

Significant Milestones

Ever-living and ever-loving God,
we praise you for the life and love you have bestowed on us.
Especially do we thank you for making yourself known in the power
of your Holy Spirit on this Day of Pentecost.
We thank you that we do not live this life alone,
or in our own strength,
or by our own wits.
Show us how we may be open
to your Spirit and Power in the challenges that face us every day.
We are grateful that you have called us
into the fellowship of the church,
where we may be strengthened by the witness of others
who know your power in their lives.
We pray especially
for those in our congregation who are hurting:
for those who feel the pain of bereavement;
for those who have been disappointed in friends they have trusted, and
for those who are bewildered over
how to take care of their older loved ones.
For all who care for the sick:
for doctors and nurses and
all the faithful folk
who keep hospitals and nursing homes going.
Bless all such.

Hear us as we thank you for the good things of life:

for mothers - mothers we have with us and mothers

whose memory we cherish;

for graduations and other milestones

that are significant to us and

to those we love;

for miracles of healing, in mind and body.

We praise you

for the beauty of this part of the world in which we live.

We thank you that you have come to us

in the person of Jesus Christ,

offering us health and wholeness and eternal life.

Now we pray for illumination as we study your word.

Amen

May 14, 1989

For the Communicant Class

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being,
we praise you for being infinite in power and grandeur,
yet close beside us here in this chapel.
With an entire universe to govern,
you have given us your assurance in Jesus Christ
that you are involved in the things that concern us.
You have asked that we bring before you
those people and situations that matter to us,
and so we do.
We say in our hearts before you the names of
those whom we care about who are sick;
those who are worried about money;
those who are estranged from those who were once their dearest;
and those concerned about what they consider
wrong decisions their loved ones are making.
We bring before you not just those who mean most to us,
but your creatures all around this planet.
Especially do we ask your presence with your children
in China,
Panama,
the Philippines,
and the countries of the Middle East.
We ask your special closeness to those who have recently joined our church,
particularly those in the communicants class.

We ask your guidance at the meeting of Presbytery on
Thursday in Morehead City.
Bless us as we study and as we worship;
and as we share a meal together,
keep us ever aware of those who do not have enough to eat.
In Jesus' Name, **Amen.**

May 21, 1989

O Love That Will Not Let Us Go

Almighty and eternal God,
greater than our highest thoughts of you,
infinite beyond our imagining, we dare to believe
the promise of your word that you care for each one of us
with a love that will not let us go.
You have showered us with so many blessings:
with life, and health,
with families to cherish;
with friends who bring us comfort and companionship,
who know us better than we know ourselves.
When we come into your presence
we are conscious of those who need you in a special way:
for those who are sick, who are facing operations;
for those who fear death—and those who fear life.
We pray for those who are expecting babies,
and those who rejoice in babies recently born.
We pray for all those in homes, in schools, in churches,
who have responsibility for training children and young people.
And, at the other end of life,
we pray for those who are old and lonely,
who need to share their memories.
We thank you for those bright witnesses
whose hearts are filled with cheer in spite of their infirmities,
and whose faith strengthens ours.
In the words of the Psalmist
"hold us in the hollow of your hand."
For your love's sake.

Amen

May 28, 1989

Those Given Us to Love

Dear God, we thank you for this day
you have asked us to observe as our Sabbath.
We thank you for your example of resting,
and we pray that we may use discipline
in making ourselves find time to rest.
We thank you for your command to "remember" on this day,
and we pray you will direct our thoughts to think
back on your goodness to us.
Especially do we remember before you this day
those you have given us to love:
our grandparents, parents, spouses, children, grandchildren,
and that wider circle of family and friends
that enriches our lives.
We thank you for those who live in your presence
and in our memory,
and we thank you for those who are still with us.
We remember before you those who need you in a special way:
those who are discouraged and feel that they are not needed;
those who are not really ill, but who do not feel good,
for whom the zest of life is now missing.
Bless all such.
We pray for the wider reaches of your church universal,
and for those who labor in places of difficulty and obscurity
while doing your work around the globe.
We pray particularly for those who are struggling

for the freedom we are apt to take for granted.

O God, we pray for our city,

and ask that you show us as citizens

how we can make Wilmington

and this part of your world a place

where all of your children can find homes

and health

and meaningful lives.

Show us how we may be good stewards of our environment.

Direct us now as we look to your word

for guidance and encouragement, in the name of Christ.

Amen

June 4, 1989

Lord of Life

Lord of all life,
to whom we owe all that we are and have,
we thank you for the gift of this past week:
for its challenges, its successes, its good news,
and for the courage and strength you gave us
to endure those experiences that made us discouraged,
or ashamed, or depressed.
We remember before you all those
who are on our hearts today:
those who are sick;
those who are watching by hospital beds;
those in nursing homes
those who are bewildered and confused.
We pray for those who are overworked,
and for those who can find no work to do.
We pray for families among whose members
there is estrangement,
misunderstanding,
hard feeling;
for friendships that need repairing.
We pray for the great problems of our world,
and for the overuse
and misuse of the planet you have entrusted to us.
We pray for the greed we see in public places

that reminds of our own selfishness.

We pray for the end of strife between nations and tribes.

We ask you

to take this time of exploring your word

to make us open

to what it means to be your followers.

Bless our church, our pastor, our officers, all our members,

and keep us faithful to our promises

to each other and to you.

Through Christ.

Amen

September 10, 1989

Health and Happiness

"Immortal, Invisible, God only wise,"
we thank you for this Sabbath day,
for the time of rest and remembrance it affords us.
We thank you for good health,
and for the energy and circumstances
that make it possible for us to be here.
We thank you for healing, for recovery from illness,
and for keeping us safe when we were in danger.
Hear us as we name before you those of our families and friends
who are facing difficult decisions;
for those sick in hospitals,
and those well at home;
for those households where death has come recently;
for those facing walls of hostility.
Lord, show us how we may become instruments of your peace.
Lord, we pray
for people who are caught up in a life of crime,
especially for those who stole property
from our church this past week;
for lawyers and judges and police officers;
for all who are willing
to serve in political offices
in our city, county, state and nation;
for all victims of crime.
From this hour of study give us courage and wisdom

to face the particular challenges that will confront us this week.
Grant that in every thing we may feel your presence with us.
An now we thank you for our Bibles,
for the good news about life and death
that we learn from your word.
So give us open ears and minds to know
what you want to say to us this day.

Amen

September 17, 1989

Hurricane Hugo and the Mystery of Grace

"Bless the Lord, O my soul;
and all that is within me, bless His holy name."
Our hearts are full of gratitude for your sparing us this week
and keeping us safe when others were in danger;
We confess that we are puzzled by the mystery
of your dealing with the universe you created.
Our easy moralism, of thinking you always reward
the good and punish the evil people, does not always work out.
We know that, but for your unfathomable grace
we might be in the predicament of our friends
suffering on the South Carolina coast.
In all your mystery, we know that you call us to be faithful;
and we ask you to guide each one of us in the responsibility
you lay upon us to be thoughtful and generous
to those who have lost so much.
Give to us all a sense of perspective,
as you have reminded us of our fleeting hold
on this life and all its possessions.
We remember before you those who are ill,
especially those who are discouraged
about their physical and mental conditions.
We pray for those in whom the pulse of life grows weak,
who wonder why they keep on living.
We pray for all who minister to needy people:

doctors, nurses, staff persons, social workers,
and all who get under the load of humanity's burdens.
We pray for our church on this day when
we meet at the table of our Lord,
and when we remember those who will celebrate communion
through all the hours of this day and night.
Bless all who lead in worship,
and all who share in what
the body and blood of Christ mean to us all.

Amen

October 1, 1989

A Dedicated Leadership

Almighty and eternal God,
we bow in awe before your greatness
and in wonder at the care you take of each one of us.
In a day when thousands are homeless,
you have let us live in luxury.
At a time when countless numbers are hungry, and starving,
you have furnished us with so much that a major concern is dieting.
In a world where myriads risk their lives
in order to live in political freedom,
some of us do not even plan to vote on Tuesday.
O Lord,
forgive us for our lack of appreciation for your blessings.
We remember before you today those of special concern:
those who are sick and are worried about themselves;
those who face serious surgery;
those who are threatened with losing their jobs;
parents who are concerned about children,
and children who are concerned about parents.
We thank you for this church with which you have blessed us,
especially on this day of installation of officers,
when we look backwards and forward.
Lay your hand upon your servant/our shepherd, Doug Vaughan,
and give us grace to respond to his leadership.
Bless all who study in these halls today,
and especially open our eyes to appreciate
the picture of Jesus Christ we get in the Gospels.

Amen

October 8, 1989

The Differentness of Sabbath

God of the Sabbath,

we thank you for this day that you created to be different:

a day of rest,

a day of remembrance.

Even though we do many of the same things

we do every day,

show us how the attitude

we bring toward the Sabbath may make it different.

Help us to treat this day

as an unrepeatable gift,

cherishing the presence of those very special people

we are privileged to call family and friends.

We come to you with a sense of unworthiness,

needing to be reminded of the gospel:

to be reassured that you love us in Jesus Christ,

not be cause we are good, but in spite of the fact that we are bad.

Hear us as we name before you those

who are of special concern to us today:

those who are sick;

those who are taking care of the sick;

those who know their time on earth is limited;

all of us, as we come to grips with our own mortality.

We thank you for the gospel of Jesus Christ and its

promise that life does not end in death,

but rather death ushers us into the presence of the

One who called us into being;

We thank you for our church:

for those who have been members of this fellowship for many years;

for those who are new.

Help us each one to find our place of service in the church.

Give us a special support group of members who care about us,

and let us be helpful to them.

Bless little children who love us and whom we can help.

Bless little children who are being influenced by their teachers.

Bless young people who resolve to be useful in your kingdom

and who are being strengthened by bonds

of friendship with other church members.

Thank you for this Sabbath day.

Amen

October 15, 1989

Our Reformation Heritage

"God of grace and God of glory"
we thank you for your grace that has brought us through a long night,
preparing us for this new day,
and for your glory that lifts our hearts to worship you.
We thank you for your church that unites us,
that blesses us with friends tried and true, old and new.
When we come into your presence we do not come alone,
but we approach you with petitions for those we care about
who are in special need.
We pray for those who are sick;
for those who are in hospitals or nursing homes;
for those who are worried about what the future may hold
for them and their loved ones.
We pray for young people,
who do not have the perspective of years in dealing with temptations,
and for older people
who are fighting the inclination to be cynical or discouraged.
We pray for married couples,
especially for those who need to recapture
what it was that used to make their relationship so special.
We pray for those who had to give up
trying to make a marriage work,
whose sense of guilt and failure
make them need so much to hear again and again
the good news of God's forgiving love.

We pray for those recently married,
that they may be aware of the spirit of Jesus Christ,
the unseen guest in their home.

We give you thanks, Lord, as we approach All Hallow's Eve,
for our Reformation heritage, with its emphasis:
on your sovereignty,
on the centrality of your Word,
both written and in Jesus Christ,
and on the priesthood of believers,
that bids us come directly to you.

In your name.

Amen

October 29, 1989

For All the Ages & Stages of Life

O God our Rock,

our strength,

our ever-present help in trouble,

We praise you

for the magnificence of your creation:

oceans and fields and skies and living creatures,

especially those people your grace has given us

the privilege of knowing and loving.

We thank you

for the joy of human companionship;

for sympathetic listeners;

for those who forgive our failures

and overlook our shortcomings;

for those who help us to have more respect and esteem for ourselves.

Bless all such.

We come to name

before you in our hearts

those dear to us who need you in a special way:

those near death, who welcome

the thought of going into that new dimension;

those for whom death is a robber, and a fearful foe;

those who suffer pain that cannot be relieved by human means.

We pray

for homes where there are little children, especially new babies;

for parents, who are aware that they are amateurs,

and that they were themselves raised by amateurs.

We pray, too,

for those going through the trying years of adolescence:

young people themselves, their parents, their teachers.

We pray for the poor, the hungry, the homeless:

give us as your people in this church the vision,

the will, and the courage to do our part in making conditions better.

Be with those in the helping professions,

and help us to acknowledge their part

in holding together the fabric of our common life.

These things we ask for your love's sake.

Amen

November 5, 1989

God's Creativity On Our Behalf

O God, you are infinitely great beyond anything we can imagine:
Creator of all the universes there are,
you have shown your love by creating each one of us,
endowing us with fantastically intricate
bodies and minds and spirits.
You have placed us
in a blessed and beautiful part of your world,
with privileges far beyond anything we could ever deserve,
with freedoms we did not earn.
Lord God, hallowed be your name;
and thanks be to you for the special blessings
we name in the silence of our hearts before you . . . .
You have given us so much,
yet you have invited us to come to you for more,
in prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving for your past bounty.
There are those on our hearts
whose health of body and mind we remember before you:
those who are facing hard times financially;
those who are fearful of the direction their children's lives are taking;
those bewildered by decisions they must make.
Lord, bless all such.
O God, we pray today especially for the German people,
for their new-found freedom.
We ask that you may raise up worthy leaders
to guide them in the course of their journey as a people.

We pray, too, for the people
of Hungary,
Czechoslovakia,
Poland,
Russia,
China,
Western European nations.
We pray for your church in this world,
and for all who represent the name of Jesus Christ.
Sustain them with your presence,
and with the assurance of our love
and support.
Bless this our church, O Lord,
and guide our plans,
that they may be in accord with your will for us,
for the glory of your name and witness.
For your love's sake.

Amen

November 12, 1989

The Presence of God

Sunday after Sunday you meet with your children,
in houses we have built for that meeting,
and yet we know that no house, no building,
no shrine can contain you,
nor can the highest heaven in the remote stretches
of unimaginable infinity.
But we come to you boldly,
believing that you are here in this chapel with us,
and that you, as a Father, as a Mother, as a Shepherd
want us to bring to you our needs.
You know what these needs are,
but we need to think about them in your presence.
We name before you those children who are out of our reach,
but are not beyond yours.
We pray for parents whom we watch in dismay
growing weaker and less able to cope.
We pray for those on whom you have placed
responsibility in the church,
in our local government,
and in the higher echelons of our nation.
We pray for your peace to prevail in the countries of Europe,
in the uncertainties of these times.
We pray for those who teach the children of our church,
and of our local schools:
for those who feed children who are hungry;

for those who provide jobs for their parents.

We pray for Hospice workers;

for those who do menial jobs in our community,

with little recognition or reward.

And now we thank you for your written word,

especially as it focuses on the Living Word,

even our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen

November 19, 1989

Advent: The Preparing Time

God, our Maker, our Redeemer, our Comforter and Companion,
we thank you for this new day, new month, new Advent Season;
we thank you for all the privileges and joys that life brings to us.
We praise you for the gifts of home and friends,
and we thank you for the assurance
that as you have been with us in the past,
so you will come to us and be with us in the future.
We remember before you
those who need you in a special way:
those who are sick;
those who are worried;
those who have learned bad news;
those who have suffered disappointment.
Surround us, we pray,
in this Advent season with the truth
that your solution to our needs
was and is the gift of Jesus Christ.
We thank you that Christmas was your idea
and that it comes each year to remind us of your constant love.
Help us in all our preparing for this blessed season
to prepare our homes and our hearts for your coming to us
in the unpretentious form of a baby.
Guide us in responding to demands
on our time and money this month.

Amen

December 3, 1989

God's Blessing on Our Church

Almighty God, maker of all things visible and invisible,
our Redeemer and Comforter,
We thank you for revealing yourself to us,
especially as we know you in our Lord Jesus Christ.
We thank you for settling us in this good land,
for surrounding us with family and friends,
for blessing us with food and clothing and shelter.
We remember before you those who are not so fortunate
and ask you to direct our efforts and our energy on behalf of them.
You alone, O Lord, know all that we bring to this place this morning.
You know our burdens of guilt:
for wrongs we have done,
for people we have disappointed,
for failure to make use of the talents you have given us.
Forgive us, we pray.
We come to thank you for good things that have happened:
for sick people getting better;
for hearing good news when we had expected bad;
for friends who believe in us and who need us.
We thank you for the joy of children's faces in this season;
for your people showing signs of maturing.
We thank you for our church, especially for the crucial matters
we will face at the congregational meeting.
Be especially close to our pastor, our session, and all our members.
And the prayer we make for our church,
we make for your church worldwide, for the sake of Christ.

Amen

December 10, 1989

Christmas-God's Incomparable Gift

O God of Christmas and of Calvary,

We gather to praise you for your letting us

be among those to whom you have revealed yourself

in Jesus of Nazareth.

We thank you for all those who have shared

in telling us the Christmas Story:

for Sunday School teachers and superintendents,

for DCE's and ministers;

most especially for our parents and grandparents.

We thank you for the bittersweet memories

that come crowding in at this season:

for those we've "loved long since, and lost a while;"

for those whom we never got around to telling

how much we loved them.

Remind us of the preciousness of your gift of time,

and help us to make amends where there is estrangement.

We pray for those in places of strategic responsibility,

especially those helping the needy,

the homeless, the hungry.

Help us in dealing with the depression

that comes when we feel so inadequate

in the face of all that needs to be done.

Hear us now as we thank you especially for our church,

here and throughout the world.

Help us to use our backward glances
to give us courage to look ahead,
to be reassured that You have a plan for the world,
made most visible in Jesus
who came as a helpless baby:
the revelation of Almighty God.

Amen

December 17, 1989

New Year's —The Uncertain Versus The Certain

Lord of the years, and the decades,
we thank you for bringing us thus far on our pilgrimage of life,
and we ask that we may be conscious of having our hand in yours.
You alone know what we and our families and our church have before us.
Our greatest asset is your presence.
And this presence we claim, here and now, for ourselves
and for those dear to us.
We thank you that you made each of us an individual,
and we are grateful for the homes into which you delivered us.
We praise you for those who were with us in childhood and adolescence,
and whom we now know only in memory.
And we thank you for those who are still with us.
We thank you for the babies of our congregation,
for the new parents, whose awe at the miracle of birth
is not diminished by the persistent duties that these little ones demand.
We pray in this coming year for our denomination,
for its seminaries, its colleges, and for all
who make the influence of Jesus Christ a reality in a secular world.
And now we ask your special blessing on those
who are on the margins of life,
who seem to have come into the world at the wrong time,
in the wrong place.
Guide us O Lord, in knowing how to help them.
In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

December 31, 1989

For Families to Love and Friends to Cherish

O God, who made us and placed us in this good land;
who gave us families to love and friends to cherish,
we praise you for calling us into the fellowship of your church.
We thank you for preserving us in health, and for giving us
not only the fulfillment of our daily needs,
but also for showering us with special blessings beyond our deserving.
We are especially grateful that you have invited us to come to you in prayer.
When we do come,
we are aware of our unworthiness,
recognizing that we are bringing with us sins committed long ago.
Help us truly to accept your pardon.
So now direct our study,
and speak through these ancient sacred words
that message of challenge,
of hope, rebuke, and comfort you have for each of us.
We pray in Christ's name.

Amen

February 4, 1990

Accepted, Even Though Unacceptable

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts,
and of all the universe.
We are bold to come
into your presence through the sacred avenue of prayer,
because you have invited us to come.
Hallowed be your name.
We do not understand
why you have given us this privilege,
but we respond
to your invitation with joy.
We accept your gifts,
because in Jesus Christ
you have made it plain
that you have accepted us.
And so, O Lord,
we place the week
just past into your hands,
and we accept from you
this fresh new week.
With your help,
we will make this one better.
We will put away
the hurt feelings, the grudges,
the unworthy attitudes that may tempt us

to be less than the best

you want from us.

Hear us as we remember

before you

those who need you in a special way:

those who may have had bad news

about themselves or their loved ones;

those who have the burden of telling

others bad news they resist hearing;

those concerned about

where money is coming from.

We pray for

those worried about parents,

and about children.

Hear us as we rejoice over good news:

sick friends who have gotten well,

children who are showing signs of strong character.

Especially do we pray

a special prayer for Libby and Oscar in Morocco.

We thank you for their willingness

to have their special skills used;

and we ask that you will help the people they deal with

to see in Libby and Oscar the spirit of holiness

that is Jesus Christ.

Keep them and us in health and holiness.

For the love of Jesus Christ. Amen

February 11, 1990

God Our Rock, Our Stability, and Our Strength

God our Rock,
our source of stability
and strength in a changing world.

We thank you for
bringing us safely through another week.

We thank you
for people we've been with,
in home, business, neighborhoods -
for the reassurance
they give us that we matter.

We thank you
for seeing us through hard times,
when those we care about are sick,
are grieving, are plagued with
problems too great to bear
without the strength of Jesus Christ.

We pray
for our church, this church,
our denomination
and its world-wide witness,
and Presbytery offices here.

We pray
for those who study in these buildings,
for our minister, our choir,
our officers, church school teachers,
associate pastor, nominating committee,
for the Waldkirchs,

We pray also
for parents disappointed in children, and vice versa,
for political leaders in our community and worldwide
who are trying to make the world a better place.

We thank you
for the encouragement of recent events
in Europe and Africa, and ask for your guidance
in the hard days ahead of knowing
how to use freedom.

Guide our steps this week,
leading us where
you need us
for the work of your Kingdom.

Amen

February 18, 1990

Life is Fast, Life is Slow

O Eternal God, author and Creator of all things that are,
we bow before you in worship.
O Lord, life is so fast, and the weeks tumble on top of each other.
We don't accomplish all we had intended,
and unfilled opportunities pass us by.
And life is slow, dragging by on leaden feet
when we are waiting for what we anticipate,
waiting for what we dread.
But God, we thank you that you are ageless and timeless,
and we can take refuge in you,
the guardian of all our yesterdays
and all our tomorrows.
Give us the courage to have faith in you,
and in your governance of all our lives,
and the lives of those we hold especially dear.
We thank you this hour,
for your written word: for Isaiah who heard and followed your call;
for his disciples who kept record of your words through him;
for those countless translators
and preservers of your word
that make it possible for us
to hear you speak to us in our time and language.
We pray your special presence in the lives
of those we name in our hearts:
for the healing of the sick (Ceille Reagan, John Purdom)

for the bereaved;

for the lonely;

for the poor, the hungry.

Open avenues to us to know how to help.

And now bless our church,

and those who have special responsibility here,

and those who are involved

in our government: city, county, state and nation.

May your will be done in elections throughout the world.

These things we ask

for your love's sake.

Amen

February 25, 1990

Blessings Abound Where'er Christ Reigns

God of the ages, God of the seasons,
God of every day of our lives,
We thank you for the life you have given us, and we bow
before your greatness and your goodness.
You have called us into being,
and made us aware of your presence.
Even though our first impulse is to hide
from you and to say with Isaiah,
"Woe is me!"
You have made your forgiveness
clear as you respond to us with infinite love.
We thank you for your incredible love,
which includes giving us
jobs to do in your kingdom.
We thank you that some of those jobs we dread,
in your providence "break in blessings round our heads".
We ask you to show us how these special days of Lent
may foster in us a repentant spirit,
in gratitude for what you have done for us in Jesus Christs.
As we think about his life,
help us not to leave him in Galilee and Judea,
but to realize his living presence in our day,
in our world, in our lives.
In the sadness of bereavement;

in the pain of sickness;

in our concern when those we love go the wrong way;

in the boredom of everydayness

help us to be aware that we worship a God who cares.

We ask your special presence with Libby and Oscar,

John Purdom, and physicians.

In this day when we think of our call to missions,

we give you thanks for those who have

gone to the corners of the earth

to speak and to heal and bless.

We thank you

for the Landers' and for Dr. McNeely

who share their witness with us.

We thank you for the healers from our own congregation,

and those who have gone to Haiti and other places with them.

As we are your church in this place,

help us to be faithful in the work of Jesus Christ here.

For your love's sake.

Amen

March 4. 1990

Being Honest With Ourselves

Dear God, teach us how to pray!

Teach us how to come into your presence

with praise and thanksgiving,

to be aware of your holiness,

of your power,

of your infinite compassion.

Show us how to be honest about ourselves,

as we recognize that

we are not worthy of all your gifts to us.

We praise you, O God,

for assuring us that you love us

in spite of our sins.

God, teach us how to be grateful:

for letting us live

in this country, this city;

for this church,

for those who have been its ministers

and its members through the years;

for those who built these buildings,

who developed its program.

Help us to be faithful to our resolutions.

We pray especially

for those who do not know

why they have been permitted to live

so long, who have nothing to live for;

for those who do not

see why their lives are

to be cut short, for they have so much to live for.

Heal those suffering

the pain of illness,

of grieving,

of concern about loved ones far away,

about children who seem to have gone astray.

Bless all such, in Jesus' name.

Amen

March 11, 1990

For the Fellowship of Study

Dear God, you have created us,
each one unique,
and placed us in our time and space,
giving us health and families,
and work and friends,
and challenges and joys
and a church where we can be reminded of you.
We thank you
for the fellowship of study,
for all who gather with us in this chapel,
for the concern
we bear toward each other.
We thank you
for the way your timeless words speak to us,
words we have heard before
but that come alive
because of the different circumstances
from which we hear them.
We thank you
for those who have preserved
and translated the Scriptures,
and now we ask that
you will show us how to translate
the words of Isaiah into our lives.
Hear us
as we ask your special presence
by sick-beds, with doctors and nurses,
nursing home staff.

We pray

for those dear to us

who need your continued healing,

your continued comforting in bereavement;

your continued care for needy parents,

and children.

We pray

for "those in whom

the pulse of life grows weak",

and for those who are bored

with the dullness of the routine

of their daily existence.

Lord,

we pray that you will recharge

our batteries in this Lenten season,

so we may realize afresh

what it means that you have come to earth and shown us

what it is really to live in fullness,

in abundance, in meaning and joy.

Thank you

for our church.

Be the leader of our minister,

our officers, our various committees,

especially those charged with the search for our associate pastor,

and those working with our capital campaign.

Grant that what we do

on the corner of Third and Orange

may make a difference in this city and beyond.

Amen

March 18, 1990

The Challenge to Be Better Than We Are

O God,

you are from everlasting to everlasting,

great beyond all our dreaming,

yet concerned with the least of your creatures.

We claim your concern for us,

here and now, with the particular baggage

we have brought with us;

and that baggage includes not just ourselves

and our loved ones and our church,

but all your children on this planet.

Hallowed be your name, O Lord,

for your great gift to us of Jesus Christ,

for what he reveals to us of your love,

or his challenge to us to be better than we are.

We thank you

for all the ties

that bind us together as a church;

for the plans about this church house

you have led us to make,

for all who are making it possible for us to serve

you better from this place.

We pray

for your guidance

each step of the way.

We lift before you

those who need you in a special way;

those sick in body,

in mind and spirit;

for those recently bereaved;

for those who face hard decisions;

for those worried about the future.

We rejoice before you

with those who have recently welcomed

new life into their homes;

for those whose children

have made them especially happy;

for those stepping out in new ventures and

accepting new challenges— bless all such.

Now we thank you

for your written word,

and ask that, as you have so many times,

you will speak through these ancient words

just that message of challenge

we need this day.

In the spirit of Christ we pray.

Amen

April 1, 1990

From the Depths of God's Love

Lord God, we thank you for your seeking love
that prompts in us the desire to seek you and find you,
for you are not far from any one of us.
We thank you for the generosity with which you have blessed us,
that you should place us in this good land,
with blessings far beyond anything we could ever deserve,
in families, jobs to do, people to live Lord.
Forgive us for the feverishness with which we seek happiness for ourselves,
forgetting that your best gifts come to us
unasked, unsought, from the depths of your love to us.
We remember before you those who are especially on our hearts;
those we know in hospitals, those ill at home,
those aching with grief in the loss of loved ones.
We thank you for the witness and courage
of those bearing up under special difficulties.
And now we approach your word on this Palm Sunday
with gratitude for the greatness of the prophet
whose words we study, asking that you will speak
to us through the magnificence of his message,
in the spirit of Christ.

Amen

April 8, 1990

God of the Living, Conqueror of Death

O God of the living, who has conquered the death we fear,
we thank you for this day when we can remember
those dear to us who are with you in life,
glorious beyond our imagining.
We thank you for the hope this day brings,
as we affirm your promise of life beyond death.
We thank you for our church where we can celebrate life and its meaning.
We thank you for those who have gone before us,
sitting in these pews, rejoicing in the music and
stained glass and scripture study.
We pray not only for our church but also for the church of Jesus Christ
throughout the world, especially for those in tough places.
We come to you today with our various needs,
some of which we share with others, other needs known only to you.
We come to be healed and forgiven for those things we have done
that we are ashamed of;
those people we have hurt by our inattention,
by a thoughtless remark,
by our not following through on promises made.
Forgive us, O God.
We come needing assurance that you are taking care of those
we love whom we can't reach, particularly those we find
difficult to deal with — and we pray for those who find us difficult.
Grant this day that the Living Christ may come alive in us,
and that we may be an influence

for the spread of his joy and triumph in life.

We pray for our church;

for all who are going through the challenging task

of rethinking our church loyalty in terms of our checkbooks.

O Lord,

all the goods of this world, and "the cattle on a thousand hills"

are thine alone.

Show us what you want us to do

with that part you have entrusted with us.

We name before you our sick

- and those who need you in a special way

- for your church worldwide.

Amen

April 15, 1990 - Easter

Christ the Bearer of Wholeness and Forgiveness

God Almighty and eternal, we bow before your majesty,
your omnipotence, and your love.
How grateful we are that you have brought us into being
in a time and place where we can know you,
especially in the life and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
We come because you have asked us to come,
even though you know we are not worthy to be in your presence.
But we come boldly, because we believe
you have brought us forgiveness and wholeness in Jesus Christ.
You have assured us, Lord, that when we come to you,
we may bring our petitions, and so here they are.
Only you know those particular concerns
that are at the top of the heap for us today;
only you know those big things, and those little mean things
of which we are ashamed.
Help us to accept that you forgive us.
We bring before you those in special need:
those who are ill and the people who minister to them;
those who have suffered bereavement
and are having to restructure their lives;
those who need money, those who need the support of friends.
We pray for marriages, especially where there is misunderstanding,
or tension, or deep disagreements.
We thank you for the joy and fulfillment of marriage
and for the example of good marriages.
We thank you for your written word,
and ask that your Spirit may illumine
our study of your ancient servant, Isaiah.
All this we ask for your love's sake.

Amen

April 22, 1990

Companion in Every Dark Valley

Open our eyes, O God, that we may see you
walking beside us,
for we believe the promise of your presence.
We acknowledge our need of you;
our need to come clean before you
and confess those things
we hate to admit —
those things we have done that we should not have done,
and we lay our repentant
spirits before you.
We need the assurance of your presence
in the lives of loved ones and friends
who need your healing touch,
who need to know that in Jesus Christ
you are with us in every dark valley we have to go through.
We remember especially before you:
families recently bereaved,
those who are ill in body and mind,
those worried about children, parents,
those who are lonely, whose contemporaries
seem to be slipping away, one by one.
We pray for our city, that you may show us
how we may be your servants
to make Wilmington a good place to live
for all your children of all backgrounds.

Amen

April 29, 1990

For the Enriching Joy of Friendship

Lord, grant that our turning to you in prayer may never
be a perfunctory act of custom,
but may always be a reflection
of our deep need of you every hour of our lives.
We thank you for the gift of life,
for each day you give to us.
Some of us have felt death close by, but we have been spared.
Strengthen our faith that you are with us
in this life and the next.
We thank you for this assurance in Jesus Christ.
Accept our gratitude that you have brought us together
in the fellowship of the church, of this church.
Show us how we may enrich life for each other
and find in each other a support and comradeship
that adds joy to our lives.
Always, Lord, we remember before you
those who need you in special ways;
for those who are ill in body or mind,
for those worried about loved ones;
for those facing hard decisions;
for those who find it hard to believe
they are forgiven in Jesus Christ.
We pray for those bearing heavy responsibility,
in our community, our state, our nation.
We ask your special blessing on those who are trying to do right

in Eastern Europe, Central America, China, and the Middle East.

Now guide our study, that we may hear through these ancient words,

your

living

words to us this day.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

May 13, 1990

Our Growing Fellowship

Lord, teach us to pray.

Teach us to make the time in our days to be still

and know that you are God, that we belong to you.

Help us not to be afraid to pray—

not to fear where you might call us to go,

or what you might call us to do.

We thank you for this Sabbath day, for the change of pace it affords,

for the reminder it brings of Christ's resurrection.

Hear us as we bring before you the special concerns of our hearts;

those with serious illness—

and those who just don't feel good.

Those facing hard decisions—and those who resent decisions

being made for them.

We pray for our church especially in the last phase

of our financial campaign.

We pray for new members of our church;

for those who are considering joining.

Show us how we may make a strong witness for Jesus Christ

on this corner, and through all the corners of the universe

where our influence may extend.

We pray for our deacons and elders, our church school teachers.

We pray for our staff, for our shepherding groups

who minister to the needy among us.

We pray for our country, our president

and all in authority with him;

for the congress and our state legislature;
for all who are trying to make our world a better place
for all God's people.
Speak to us through your written word,
and help us translate the words of Job
into your living word to us, through Jesus Christ.

Amen

May 20, 1990

The Time of Milestones

O God, we are your children.
You have created us,
and put us in this time and place.
Thank you for all your gifts of family and friends.
You hold us responsible for what we do here and now;
we need your help.
We pray today for graduates—for all those who are
marking a milestone during this season.
Show each one how to be a good steward
of their minds and abilities.
We pray for teachers and school administrators,
and the difficulties they face.
We come without answers.
We pray for those in special need;
those who have had discouraging diagnoses
of their physical conditions;
those who are in pain;
those in financial difficulty;
those who have had to take on responsibilities
beyond what they can handle; bless all such.
We pray for our church, at this milestone time,
and ask your continued guidance in the way we go.
We thank you for the financial campaign,
for the response of our members
and the indication of their response to you.

We acknowledge afresh your claim on our lives
and all we have and are.
We pray for our nation, for all who are acting on our behalf.
Grant that the support we give them may
bear down on right moral principles,
and may encourage them to act with integrity.
And now we thank you for Job,
asking that we may hear through his words,
your word to us,
here and now,
in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Amen

May 27, 1990

Gratitude For Joint Commitment

God our Creator, our Redeemer, and our ever-present help,
accept our praise and thanks on this Day of Pentecost.
Help us to open our hearts and our minds to your leadership,
that the same spirit that led the early church may lead us,
in our particular corner of your people.
We thank you for the great lift of last Sunday,
for your gift of success for the campaign
especially for the depth of commitment it represented,
and for the trust in each other that it engenders.
We pray for all to whom this week is special:
for our General Assembly meeting in Salt Lake City,
that all the commissioners and staff may be led by your Holy Spirit.
Bless those who have birthdays, anniversaries, and
those who are graduating, beginning new chapters in their lives.
We pray especially for those who are ill, and those who are
discouraged about their health.
Give healing hands and hearts to all who deal with them.
For those "in whom the pulse of life grows weak,"
we ask that you will give them courage
to face each day as a gift.
We thank you for Scripture,
for all who study your Word in these halls.
Speak to us through the words of Job,
and deepen our sense of meaning in life,
especially as we know you in Jesus Christ. Amen.

June 3, 1990

The Gift of Government

Eternal God,
our Maker,
Redeemer,
and ever-present help,
we thank you for the gift of this gorgeous day,
for the health and strength to be able to come to this house of worship;
for the friends who surround us,
for the assurance that whatever is ahead for us this week,
you will be with us and your strength will accompany us.

We thank you for the renewal of our sanctuary and this chapel;
for our fellow members who have contributed
money and time and planning to make it possible;
for all the workmen who have been involved.

"Heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee,"
but we are grateful for this place of beauty that can remind us of you
through Jesus Christ.

Help us, Lord, to use this church as a springboard
for doing your work for the needy people of Wilmington and beyond.

Open our eyes to the needs of those around us;
those who mask sad thoughts with a smile,
who hide disappointment with a cheerful voice.

Grant that our study of your Word may prepare us to face this week.

We remember especially
our national leaders in their search for peace.

We remember

all our fellow citizens on Tuesday.

We thank you for the priceless gift of the freedom

and responsibility of the vote.

Bless all those who have offered themselves for service

in our community

and our state

and nation.

Especially do we name before you our member John Codington,
that whatever you may call him to be or to do this week,
he may know your undergirding strength and
may continue his devotion to you.

All praise be to you,

O God,

as we listen to your word from the Book of Exodus.

Amen

November 4, 1990

The Bond of Pastor and People

Dear God,

we thank you for this day, with all its promise.

We thank you for the weather,

for bringing us together as your people,

for health, food and shelter that we take for granted all too often.

We pray for those not so fortunate;

for those who have had bad news;

for those who are in financial distress;

those worried about children; older people.

We pray for those who are in pain,

for those who don't feel good,

who want to serve you as they used to

but whose infirmities will not let them.

Bless all such.

We pray for our country:

for those charged with momentous decisions in the Persian Gulf.

We pray for Keith Thompson as he is installed as our

Associate Pastor today:

Knit sure the bond between us as a people,

and all those you have provided for the leadership of this flock.

Now we thank you for your word,

and ask that your spirit that inspired the writing may inspire our study.

We ask in the name of Jesus Christ your living word.

Amen

November 11, 1990

The Goodness of Life

With joy,
with praise,
with thanksgiving,
we come before you this day, O Lord.

We gather to listen to your word and set our sights on what
you would have us do and be in this week before us.

We thank you for the goodness of life,
for the loving people with whom you have surrounded us.
We thank you for that measure of health you have afforded us.

You have assured us that you want to hear
the prayers and petitions
of your children,
and so we bring them to you:

We bring the good things you have shared with us,
and praise you for life's little victories.
We lay before you our aches and pains,
those troubling thoughts we need to turn over to you.
Truly, we need you every hour,
and we ask you to strengthen your assurance
that you are with us every step of the way.

We thank you for our church;
for friendships made here;
for the ways you have used members in doing good.

We thank you for our country,
especially for our president, who has such heavy responsibility;
for our senators and congressmen;
for all our citizens,
as we struggle with the problem of greed.
Hear us
as we name before you in the silence of our hearts
those we know who need your reinforcement
and direction
and soothing comfort.

Now speak to us through ancient words
across the centuries,
and through the translations of that living word,
may we hear you speak to us and our needs
through your servant Moses.

Amen

November 25, 1990

Hearing the Word and Doing the Word

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses and Joshua,
of all our Gentile ancestors,
we thank you on this Lord's Day
for your love for us shown in Jesus Christ.
We thank you for this Advent season,
for the hope it brings,
for that Baby Jesus who became a man in whom
you have revealed your self.
We thank you for this church,
for the friends we know here,
for the opportunities we have here
of sharing your concern for those in trouble:
those who are hungry, who are lonely, worried,
and above all
those who bear a heavy burden of guilt.
Grant that all of us may not go away without realizing that in
Jesus Christ,
all our sins are forgiven.
Especially do we thank you for this communion Sunday
when we act out in the bread and the cup your giving
of yourself to us.
We pray for our country,
and all those who bear special responsibility;
for those whose decisions carry awesome consequences worldwide.

We pray for ourselves and our little areas of domain.
Grant that we may be faithful in our stewardship
of the measure of your kingdom you have entrusted to us.
We remember before you those who weigh on our
hearts in a special way:
those who have suffered disappointment;
those worried about parents;
those concerned about children;
those who have taken on the burdens of others.
And now speak to us through your word:
let us hear it afresh as though we've never heard it before,
and give us the courage to obey as you direct us.
In the spirit of Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen

December 2, 1990

Nothing in Life or Death Can Separate Us From God

Lord of our lives,
you have called us to respond to your beckoning, and
to join you in covenant.
We meet now as your people,
as those who want to follow you and
make your church act for you in the world.
We thank you for your providence
in taking care of us all our days, and
ask for your continued mercies in
whatever may face us this day and this week.
We thank you for the forgiveness
we know in Jesus Christ, and
for the joy this season brings to us.
It reminds us
that nothing can separate us from you,
in life or in death and beyond.
Hear us as we remember before you
those in special need:
those who are sick;
those who are worried about themselves
and those they love;
those who have had bad news, and have suffered losses;
Bless all such, dear God.

Give a sense of your presence
to those facing hard decisions, and
those who must make hard decisions for other people.
Bless our country, Lord,
and grant that all who are in places of authority
may depend on you to guide them.
Bless young people facing exams;
bless those who teach them.
Bless all facing verdicts about illness and
those who must give the verdicts.
Now speak to us
through the ancient words we study today.
Through events of long ago and far away,
let us hear your living word
of how you care for your people,
and give us the privilege of ministering
in your name.
For Christ's sake.

Amen

December 9, 1990

Praise Be to God!

O God
we need you, every hour, wherever we are and whatever we do.
We need you now to lead our thoughts in this hour of Bible study.
We thank you for the way you reveal yourself to our time
and generation through these ancient words.
We thank you for leading us as individuals
and as a church during the past week.
We thank you for the safe return of Hugh Hardaway,
for receiving into your eternal life Mrs. Elizabeth Evans,
for committees that spread the work of our church
throughout the community and around the world;
for classes and circles that are support groups;
for the examples we see in this church
of noble men and women and young people
whose example helps us to be faithful.
We come with burdens, Lord and we would lay those burdens on you,
for you have offered to take them.
We remember before you the sick of body and mind;
those anxious about themselves and the future;
those having a hard time obeying your clear commandments;
those who are tempted to betray others.
Bless and guide all such.
Most of all, we thank you for invading this planet
through the Jewish people and especially through Jesus Christ.
We thank you for this season of Advent,
and for the glorious music it has inspired.

Amen

December 16, 1990

Joy to the World

O God, we come to your house this day with anticipation,
with wonder and awe,
with memories that come tumbling out of Christmases past.
We come with confidence in the faith that has been transmitted to us,
faith that you have actually taken part in our humanity.
We thank you for all those to whom we are indebted for telling us
the Christmas story,
and for those in far-away places that are telling the story for us.
Our songs of joy and peace this season come to mock us,
for we seem so far from either.
Show us what it means,
in our little corner of the globe, to be faithful to you,
and to share with those in need.
We thank you for your word,
and ask that you will open our minds and hearts to hear
what you may be saying to us in words
that may seem far away
but in fact are near.
Bless those who travel this week;
heal fractured families that are trying to get together,
and help us all to focus on what it means that Jesus Christ
came to earth as a baby, lived to be a man,
and gave himself for our salvation.
Hear us again as we acknowledge him as Lord of our lives.

Amen

December 23, 1990

For a Stronger, More Confident Faith

O God,
infinite and eternal, beyond the reckonings of time and space,
we lay before you our faith
that you have experienced our planet and our predicaments.
Miracle of miracles
you have given us the assurance that you are with us:
you always have been, you always will be.
O Lord,
strengthen our faith that this is so,
in order that we may live our lives in confidence that we matter.
May we be a witness of the gospels as to who Jesus was and what he did.
May we see in the lives of those about us
that your Spirit is at work today.
We remember before you:
those who are our special concern,
those who are sick, and are worried about themselves and their future;
those who have been bereaved, and are struggling to believe in eternal life;
those who are lonely,
who feel abandoned;
those who know the deep wounds that can be felt by ungrateful children.
We pray:
For all of us who are faced
with the unbelievable possibility that war clouds
behind us may become real;
For all who exercise authority within and between nations;

For the church in its proclamation of "Peace on earth" in this season

- a phrase that comes to haunt us.

And now

help us hear you speaking to our individual lives

that word we need.

Lord,

we do believe that you hear and answer prayer:

help our unbelief.

Amen

December 30, 1990

God's Penitent Returning Children

O Lord, sometimes we come running to you
because there is nowhere else to go.
We have exhausted our resources,
used up all our solutions to problems,
and realized that we were not meant to live our lives
without your conscious presence.
And so we ask you
in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ to accept us,
your penitent- returning children.

Infinite, eternal, compassionate God,
we thank you:
that you have called us
into the body of believers—your church,
for the friends you lead us to find here,
for people who bring out the best in us,
and who sustain us, even when we are tempted
to give up on ourselves.
Heal and restore and enlighten
those who need you in special ways;
those who have suffered loss of loved ones,
of home, of money, of independence.
Above and beyond all the smaller concerns we bring to you,
we lay before you our world at war.
In the name of the Prince of Peace

we ask your direction to all our leaders,
and your presence and support for all
who are actively engaged in warfare.
And now we ask you to prepare us
to be open to your word, and
to be ready to come to your table,
in remembrance of Jesus Christ.

Amen

February 3, 1991

That Our Country May Do Right

O God eternal,

all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving,

accept our thanks:

for the gift of life and for health to enjoy it;

for the great boon of friends

who know where we hurt,

yet, who can keep our secrets.

If on this Sabbath day we feel estranged from you,

remind us of the gospel:

that you love us and accept us,

even though we are unacceptable.

Forgive us for the time we waste

in getting hung up on our "If only's,"

fruitlessly trying to relive what cannot be recalled,

rather than pressing ahead in the duties you have for us right now.

Grant us faith to take seriously your assurance

that the cross of Christ assures that we are forgiven.

We come to you in the midst of our nation in crisis.

Give direction, and a sense of justice, to leaders of all nations,

especially our own.

Show us how we can undergird those forces

that are following your will.

Prepare our hearts for

our study of the message of the prophets,

as they prick the bubbles of our complacency,

and at the same time give us hope.

Amen

February 17, 1991

Trusting God, Our Guide

O Lord our God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless til they find their rest in you.
Draw us into the awareness of your presence,
that we may find our true selves.
We give you grateful thanks
for bringing us through this week
and we lay before you our nation
and the course to which it is being committed.
Direct and sustain those who have tremendous decisions to make,
that your justice may prevail.
Be with those who need you in a special way:
those who are sick,
those who are in pain,
those who are worried and distraught,
those who feel they have no friends.
Bless little children, Lord, especially those being mistreated,
those deprived of parents and parent-substitutes.
Be with young people who are overwhelmed
with temptations they cannot handle,
who need models and mentors and true Christian friends.
Bless marriages, Lord,
especially those in which partners cannot recall
the ardor and excitement with which they started out.
Bless all such.
Now grant that your Word may be a lamp unto our feet
and a light upon our path, in the name of Christ.

Amen

February 24, 1991

The Power of the Church

Lord of the Universe,
Creator of all peoples
on all the maps we've been looking at,
we thank you for the gift of life,
at this time,
in this place.
You have called each one of us into being,
and you have loved each of us
with a love that is awesome,
and is beyond our understanding.
When we go through deep waters
you are with us;
when we have sinned so badly
that we cannot stand ourselves,
you come before us in Jesus Christ to say we are forgiven.
Thanks be to you, O God!
We hardly know how to express to you our gratitude
for your amazing grace through the horrors of war
in the Persian Gulf.
We thank you for sustaining all those in places
of especial danger and hurting.
We ask your presence and direction
with all who have political decisions
to make in the aftermath of war,particularly President Bush
and leaders in our government and the United Nations.

We thank you for our church,

for our new staff person, Louise Duffie;

for new members who have recently joined our fellowship;

for all who work on committees.

Grant that in all the mundane,

routine jobs we do in church

we may see and be aware

of the binding strength of the community of believers.

Now we ask you

to open our eyes

to your particular message

to us through your servant Hosea.

Amen

March 3, 1991

Our Trust is in God

Lord, Teach us to pray.
We need to know
how to listen to you,
how to hear what you are saying to us
through the events of our lives
what you are saying to us
through adversity and disappointment;
what you are saying to us
through joy
and great blessing.
We need to know
what to confess to you,
even though you already know
what we need to admit;
we need your help in being honest.
We praise you for this day.
We thank you for our church
and its staff.
We thank you for our homes
and those who share them with us.
We thank you
for our country, and
ask that the current burst of patriotism
may be translated into a better life
for all people,

to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Now direct our study of your word,

spoken long ago by your prophets,

but by the power of your Holy Spirit is

lively and relevant and full of meaning to us here and now.

We name before you

in the silent places of our hearts

those dear to us who are ill,

who are grieving,

who are troubled;

those who have come to the end of their rope.

Bless all such.

Amen

March 10, 1991

To Be Good Stewards Under God

God of the sunshine,
Lord of the rain,
provider of winter's preparation
for the burst of spring,
We thank you for your provision
for your creatures
in our wonderful environment,
and we pray that you will help us
to be good stewards of all your gifts.
We thank you
for your gift of homes,
of all the homes we have known,
from birth until now.
We thank you
for all who have shared our homes,
through infancy,
childhood,
youth and maturity.
We are especially
grateful for our parents,
and for others who stood
in place of our parents.
We thank you
for the great gift of friends:
for old friends, with whom there
can be long comfortable silences
and remembrances.

We thank you

for new friends,

who bring us fresh perspective.

O God,

you know the particular experiences

we have had this week

that have troubled us.

Some we can share with others;

others can be known only to you.

And so we ask you

to strengthen our prayer life,

that we may feel assured of your everlasting arms

constantly supporting us.

Amen

March 17, 1991

Blessed Assurance!
God Loves Us–We Belong to God

O God,

you have been good to us beyond any deserving.

You have gone before us this past week with your protection,

and have prepared us for experiences we did not think we could endure.

You have kept us out of harm's way and given us new reasons for living.

We thank you for all those people and circumstances

that have given us hope and support.

We ask your forgiveness

for those we have disappointed, those whose feelings

we may have inadvertently hurt.

Draw closer together those who are estranged:

in marriages and all home relationships,

in work, in neighborhoods.

We thank you for this fresh time to celebrate the week we call "holy."

Help us each day to think of our Lord, and to discern

what it means for us to take up our crosses.

Make more real to us all what it means to live

in Christian fellowship, in justice and fairness to all people.

We thank you for your revelation in Jesus Christ: for his words,

his acts, and most of all for his death and resurrection,

in which he brings to all the world life beyond death,

For these and all of our blessings,

we give you our thanks by committing to you our lives.

Amen

March 24, 1991

God's Work Around the World

All praise to you, O God most high,
for coming to us
in Jesus Christ and bringing life,
true life that conquers death.
On his highest of holy days in our year,
we bow our hearts
before you in gratitude
for the joy of this celebration.
Lord, we do not take your gift for granted
but remember our responsibility
to share the blessedness
of salvation with people everywhere.
We thank you for the privilege today,
especially of contributing
to help through our missions
around the world.
Hear us as we bring before you:
those in special need,
those who are sick,
who are discouraged about themselves;
those who are grieving, who need the assurance
of Easter particularly now,
those who are out of sorts with members of their family,
or with neighbors or business associates.
Bless all such.

We pray

for those who teach,

especially for those

dealing with impressionable little children.

We pray for

those between jobs just now,

that they may not feel depressed.

We ask

your special presence in nursing homes,

for residents and staffs, and

for all in whom the pulse of life

is not as strong as it once was.

Amen

March 31, 1991

The Promise of God's Presence

Lord of the springtime and of your
"great, wide, beautiful, wonderful world,"
we thank you for placing us here
and showering us with beauty and blessings too numerous to mention.

O God, we know we do not deserve your gifts
but ask only that we may show our gratitude
by sharing those gifts with others.

We need you every hour, and we claim your promise,
fulfilled in Jesus Christ, that you are with us, all the time, everywhere.

We need you because of our proneness
to forget your words of instruction and warning.

We need you because we give in too readily:
to temptation,
to greed,
to lust
to acting carelessly with other people's lives.

For those in special need we ask your caring love:
for those who are seriously sick,
for those discouraged about themselves and their loved ones,
for those facing crucial decisions
that have far-reaching implications,
for those to whom we have assigned responsibilities of government
in local and international affairs.
Bless all such.

We pray for your church, holy, universal,
and especially for this church.

Grant that we may be faithful to our calling to be your servants,
in those challenges through which you confront us.

Amen

April 7, 1991

Mediators of God's Love

Almighty and eternal God, Creator of everything that is,
whose depth and height
we do not have the imagination to fathom,
we worship you and praise you and adore you,
especially as you have revealed yourself in Jesus Christ.
Your love in Christ comes to us from unexpected places,
and people we had thought were strangers
drop their masks and become for us vital parts
of the fellowship of the Christian faith.
We thank you for the variety of folks who show us new angles
on your all-encompassing love.
We thank you especially for the families
of faith that we know in this church.
We pray for those in our number who need your love
and our caring in particular ways:
those who hurt physically;
those who are suffering mentally and emotionally;
those who feel no one cares about them;
those who worry about an uncertain future;
those young people especially who are ready to give up on life;
parents and teachers who influence the lives of little children.
We ask your special presence
with those who have been given grave responsibility over nations.
We ask that your Holy Spirit in Jesus, the prince of peace,
may prevail in bringing peace and stability
to the particular trouble spots of the world.

Now speak to us
through the words of your servant Jeremiah,
and let us find in him
your call to repentance and wholeness in our lives.
We make this prayer in the name of our Lord.

Amen

April 14, 1991

God's Call to Covenant

O God our Creator, our Redeemer,
and our ever-present Help and Comforter,
we praise you for bringing us to this good day
and for promising your presence with us.
In your providence yesterday is spent,
tomorrow is not yet,
but you live with us in today.
We come into your presence to hear the gospel,
to be assured that you accept us
even though we are unacceptable,
to claim your gift of the New Covenant.
We come confessing that we are not the fulfillment
of our own dreams of what we should be,
much less your plans for us.
We come acknowledging
that we have broken your commandments,
and that we have not lived in harmony with those closest to us.
We come admitting to compression fatigue,
as we are bewildered with the famine and disease
and bitter hatred around the world that make us want to run away.
O Lord, insofar as we can help in even small ways,
especially in our church that represents Christ on earth,
guide us in what to do.
Mold us, we pray, into the force that you can use in your world,
and strengthen our faith that you will work miracles

through the dedicated efforts of your people.

We ask your healing balm on those

who arehurting from bereavement;

those discouraged over illness;

those worried over what the future holds;

those afraid of being abandoned.

Bless all such, O Lord.

And now open our minds to the words of Jeremiah.

Amen

April 21, 1991

The Amazing Power of Prayer

Eternal God, our Creator, our Redeemer,
and our ever-present help in trouble,
the Rock and stability of our lives,
we praise you for what you do for us,
what you mean to us.
You know us better than we know ourselves,
yet you love us as though you had no one else in the world to love.
Help us, O God,
to love ourselves because you love us.
And to expect the best from ourselves
because you have endowed us with so much.
Give us a renewed dedication to Jesus Christ
and joy in your service.
There are special people
we need to remember before you,
not because you are not already mindful of them
but because we believe in the power of prayer.
Some of our friends and relatives are ill, are in pain,
are discouraged about themselves
Bless all such.
Some are bowed down in bereavement and cannot let go of
someone you have called home.
Some have lost interest in living, even though they are young
and seem to us to have everything to live for.
We ask your reassurance for them, and pray you will show us

what we may do for them in your name.

We pray for our country, our congress, our president,

our pastor and for all who need you.

God of our parents,

we thank you for those beloved people who you gave to us:

to nurture

and teach

and comfort

and challenge us from the time we came into your world.

You have long ago in Jesus Christ forgiven us

for all the sins we committed against them -

especially our ingratitude,

and now we thank you for the joy

they brought us, as well as the unknown sacrifices

they made for us.

We pray for parents and children who are struggling now,

and for parents who have become children.

Be with us, O Lord, in healing and in grace.

Amen

May 12, 1991

Who Are We, and Whose Are We?

Eternal God, our Creator, our Saviour, our Comforter
and our closest Friend.
We thank you for this time of prayer
that reminds us of who we are
and whose we are.
We praise you, we adore you, we thank you
for your revelation of yourself to us in Jesus Christ.
We thank you for the fellowship of the church,
where we may find others of like mind,
who confess that we are sinners,
but who rejoice together in knowing that we are forgiven
because of the sacrifice of Christ.
Lord, we remember before you those who need you in special ways:
those who are ill;
for those still suffering for misdeeds long ago repented for;
for those whose hearts still ache
with loneliness in bereavement;
for those in crucial spots in the world who are trying
to help other people find meaning in life, we pray.
We thank you for this Sabbath day, and pray you will help us use it
for rest and for remembrance,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

May 19, 1991

Love So Amazing, So Divine, Demands My Soul, My Life, My All

O God,

you have set the solitary in families;

you have set families

in the fellowship of your church,

and we give you our grateful thanks.

You have made us so that we love each other,

with a love that proceeds

from your own love for us.

We thank you for every evidence of that love,

especially as it is described to us in our Bible, and

as we see it supremely in the cross of Jesus Christ.

We thank you for human love

that makes our relationships sacred

and that helps us endure the rough spots in life.

You have asked us to name our needs before you,

and so we do.

We would bring into your presence

those who need you in special ways:

those who have suffered great disappointment;

those who are in unremitting pain;

those who are beset by nameless fears;

those who are faced with decisions

they feel they are not qualified to make;

those for whom life has lost its zest.

Draw us all into your arms of mercy

and show us how we may be lifted

to new heights of dedication and devotion to you.

Open the pages of your written word to us,

and show us how to find

in these ancient stories, your message for us today.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

May 26, 1991

Photo Credit: Freda Wilkins

The Kenan Chapel and Family

The Kenan family has strong ties in the First Presbyterian Church. William Rand Kenan was a ruling elder, church treasurer, and teacher.

When the church was burned on New Year's Eve 1925, it was rebuilt on the present site. The chapel and tower were given as a memorial to William Rand Kenan (1845-1903) and his wife Mary Hargrave (1842-1916) by their children Jessie Kenan Wise (1871-1968), Sarah Graham Kenan (1876-1968), and William Rand Kenan, Jr. (1872-1965). Their older sister Mary Lily Kenan Flagler (1867-1917) preceded them in death.

The chapel has always been used for Bible study and Mary Sheats follows in a line of devoted teachers who have taught there. A popular part of the church, it is used frequently for recitals, weddings, and special community meetings. The tower houses the chimes that send joyous melodies throughout the surrounding downtown neighborhood.

The family has provided continuing support for the chapel, tower, and their maintenance over the years. In 1993 the family gave a new two-manual Tracker organ for the chapel to replace an earlier electronic instrument.

The Kenan family roots have been in Duplin County since the 1700's when they were leaders in the American Revolution. They have been active in the educational, political, and social life of the state ever since. The county seat of Kenansville bears their name.

The wording of the Kenan Plaza plaque on the fountain at Fifth and Market Streets offers a background of the Kenan family:

> Citizens, soldiers, entrepreneurs and philanthropists—For more than 250 years the men and women of the Kenan family have shared their lives and fortunes with the City of Wilmington. From defending it in the American Revolution to creating and preserving its economic, cultural and architectural heritage, their record of community service is one that we, the citizens of Wilmington, proudly acknowledge in dedicating this space as Kenan Plaza.
> *Erected by the community on 20 October 1992.*

The family is one of North Carolina's greatest benefactors. Examples of their gifts can be found, not only in churches, but also in schools and colleges throughout the nation. More than 100 distinguished professorships are financed annually by the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust. Some of the family's other current leadership efforts include: a global transport park in eastern North Carolina, funding for the National Center for Literacy in Appalachia, aid to former iron curtain countries in the establishment of democracy, and the teaching of free enterprise and sound business principles in this and in foreign countries.

The publication of the *Kenan Chapel Prayers* has been made possible by a gift from The Kenan Family Foundation whose members include: Frank H. Kenan; Elizabeth P. Kenan; Thomas S. Kenan, III; Owen Graham Kenan; Elizabeth Kenan Howell; Annice Hawkins Kenan; and Owen Gwyn.

It is a coincidence that the author's mother was named for Mary Lily Kenan Flagler, and it is significant that the publication of these prayers was made possible by Mrs. Flagler's cousin, Frank H. Kenan. Mr. Kenan is himself a staunch believer in the power of prayer.

The Chapel Windows

The stained glass windows in the chapel were the work of Mr. G. Owen Bonawit of New York City, and were installed at the time the building was erected.

The windows were made of specially treated antique glass and are perfectly suited to the size and Norman Gothic style of the chapel. Set off by a simple eight-petaled rose window, they contain representations of the twelve apostles. A favorite theme of stained glass artists, the disciple convey not only individual messages but also powerful truths as a group. Their most obvious message collectively is that the Christian faith is something which from the beginning had to be discovered and lived out in a fellowship.

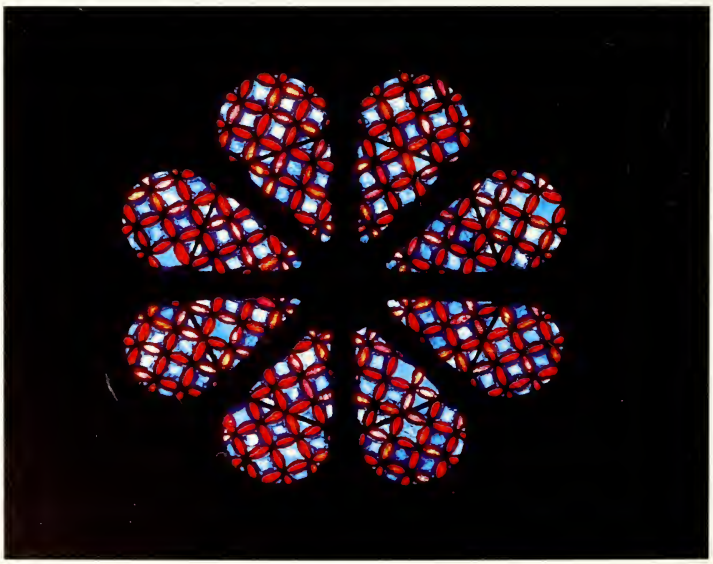
These chapel windows serve as constant reminders that discipleship is costly, and that those who choose to follow the Christ are called to no easy way. But the message of this great art is also that God's transforming power in the lives of ordinary individuals can turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6), as it once lifted an empire off its hinges.

ROSE WINDOW

(Located on the North wall)

The rose window is a symbol in itself by virtue of its form. As any work of art, the content enables us to see something which words cannot transmit. It has the power to bring about a change in thinking and to break down the habitual patterns that govern everyday consciousness.

Every rose window is a symbol or image of creation. In the chapel window, the eight spheres could represent Plato's universe with the earth at the center. Just as a circle has only one center, so everything in the universe is subordinated to the one Creator.



WINDOW

(Located on the West wall nearest the rear)

On the left, Simon the Zealot is pictured, holding a palm branch and a saw. The palm is a symbol of martyrdom and the saw indicates how he was put to death.

On the right the Apostle Paul stands with a quill in one hand and a sword in the other. The quill indicates his scriptural writings, and the sword represents both spiritual warfare, as when the apostle refers to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," (Ephesians 6:17) and the manner of Paul's death. Paul appears here among the twelve as taking the place of Judas.

WINDOW

(Located on the West wall nearest the pulpit)

On the left is Matthew, holding a quill which represents his writing the gospel that bears his name. Sometimes Matthew is shown with money bags, indicating his work as a tax collector at the time Jesus called him.

On the right, Thomas holds three arrows and a spear. The arrows were the instruments of his execution, and the spear refers to the invitation the resurrected Christ gave to Thomas to place his hand into the spear scar on the Lord's side.

WINDOW

(Located on the East wall, nearest the pulpit)

The quatrefoil window above shows a lamb holding a flag with a cross emblazoned on it.

On the left is Philip, holding a font, symbol of new life in Christ.

On the right is Bartholomew with a flaying knife and a palm branch. He was put to death by executioners who threw knives into his bound body.

WINDOW

(Located centrally on the East wall)

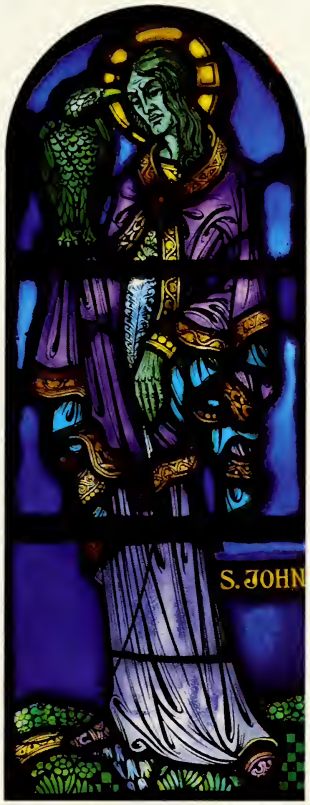
The quatrefoil window shows a sailing vessel, representing the journeys of the disciples.

On the left James the Less, (James Minor), is holding a mill wheel.

On the right is Jude, holding a boat with crosses on the sails, representing his voyages by sea to spread the gospel.

WINDOW

(Located on the East wall, nearest the rear)



The quatrefoil window here holds an eagle, symbol of John the Evangelist.

On the left is James, holding a sheathed sword, the instrument with which he was killed by Herod, according to Acts 12:2

On the right is James' brother John. His symbols here are the pen and the eagle, the pen referring to his writing and the eagle being his symbol as the gospel writer who wrote soaring prose.

WINDOW

(Located between the Chapel and the Sanctuary)

On the left, Simon Peter stands holding the church and key, symbols of the authority Christ gave him. (Matthew 16:18-19)

On the right is Andrew who holds a fish and a palm branch. The fish refers to his occupation before Jesus called him, and the palm branch to his martyrdom. Sometimes Andrew is represented with two fish, crossed, and the traditional "St. Andrew's Cross" is in the form of an X.

This clear glass window transmits light to the chapel. The figures are complemented through a repetition of many of the "quarry" window designs located in the symbolism door and window between the narthex and the nave.

The Seal of the Presbyterian Church

The Seal of the Presbyterian Church USA was chosen as a logo for Kenan Chapel Prayers. It was designed by Malcolm Grear and adopted by the General Assembly in 1985.

The Cross

The overall design is a cross, the universal symbol of the Christian faith. It is made up of several symbolic parts.

The Dove

The figure of the dove, one of the oldest symbols in the history of the church, forms the top of the cross. It symbolizes the presence of God as the Holy Spirit and also Peace and Purity. Two of the most common uses are in the stories of Noah and the baptism of Jesus.

The Fish

By visually removing the wings of the dove, the image of a fish is revealed. The fish was used by early Christians as a sign that both disguised and revealed their identities as followers of the Christ.

The Book

The horizontal winged lines represent the open Bible, the Word of God. This has been the rallying cry of all branches of the church since the Protestant Reformation.

The Pulpit

The pulpit is formed by the base stem of the cross which supports the Bible above. This symbolizes the importance of preaching in the Presbyterian tradition. Presbyterians share with other Protestants in an emphasis on the sermon and its stimulation.

The Cup

The cup is indicated by looking at the curved spine of the book and removing the covers of the book at each side so that the half-circle cup remains. The cup is supported by the stem base of the cross. The cup thus becomes a chalice and a baptismal font symbolizing the two sacraments—Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The Fire

The fire's flames at the base of the seal draw on many biblical images of fire and light. It appears in diverse cultures and various religions as an image of the divine. To Christians it represents the sovereignty of God. There are two most familiar references to fire. In the Old Testament we have the burning bush, which was not consumed. Here Moses was confronted by God and told to lead his people out of Egypt. In the New Testament we find that on Pentecost tongues of fire, symbolizing the Holy Spirit, descended on the apostles. The birth of the church was thus marked through a baptism of fire.

The Triangle

The implied triangle in the seal is formed by the base of the cross and the bottom and sides of the flames coming to a peak in the center of the cup or chalice under the Bible. The triangle has always been used in Christian art to symbolize the Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Editor's Note:
This explanation of the seal utilized as its source, a booklet Sealed in Christ by John M. Mulder who chaired the task force responsible for the design.

Editor's Notes and Acknowledgments

In publishing these prayers I would like to acknowledge the interest of the Kenan Chapel Class. These men and women have not only inspired the teacher, but have encouraged the publication of this book.

I first thought of Luke's record of the apostles making the all important request: "Lord, teach us to pray," and the Lord's Prayer that followed.

Then as I contemplated a printing of the prayers, I was reminded of one of my cherished possessions. *Prayers For The People* is a collection of prayers of the Reverend James A. Jones (1911-1966), President of Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. It was published by the Seminary following his death. His prayers reflected a sensitive and sympathetic awareness of human needs and an unshakable confidence in the efficiency of Divine Grace. I recalled it was Dr. Jones' opinion that the concentrated thought that went into the pastoral prayer was greater than that required for that day's sermon. "The most sacred part of the worship service is that time when the congregation is united in prayer under the leadership of the minister."

Dr. Jones' son, Dr. Robert Boyd Jones, and his wife Becky were members of the Kenan Chapel Class.

When the concept of the book was presented to Mr. Frank H. Kenan, he readily agreed that it was important that the prayers be permanently recorded. The Kenan Family Foundation has funded the publication. Mr. Thomas S. Kenan III and Dr. Walter E. Campbell, Kenan Family Biographer, were helpful with the family background.

Dr. E. Douglas Vaughan, Jr., Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, has assisted by writing the introduction.

Kristin Rehder, Director of Development Communications, Amherst College, provided important early input into the design and graphics.

John A. Lynch, Publisher of the *Wilmington Star-News* and *The Pham*, Chief Photographer, were most helpful in locating the title sheet photograph, and in granting permission for its use.

Freda Wilkins, photographer and member of the church, has graciously prepared the color photographs. The stained glass windows shown on pages 150-156 are her work from *Let There Be Light: God's Story Through Stained Glass* at First Presbyterian Church. They are included to show the architectural and biblical setting for the prayers.

Russell M. Carter, Elder at First Presbyterian, and his staff at Atlantic Publishing Company have been most cooperative and efficient in printing this publication.

I am much in the debt of many others who have collaborated in this publication. But, I am especially grateful to the author's sister, Sue Boney Ives. She prepared the manuscript in disc form for the printer and has patiently, efficiently, and lovingly rewritten it several times.

Leslie N. Boney, Jr.

Editor

Photo Credit: Freda Wilkins